

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and reexamine the present application. Applicants have amended claims 1, 4 and 8, and added new claims 13-21. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-4, and 6-21 remain pending in the application.

35 U.S.C. § 102

The previous Office Action rejected claims 1, 3-4, and 6-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 over Hasebe et al. U.S. Patent 5,826,129 (“Hasebe”).

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 3-4, and 6-12 are now all patentable over Hasebe.

One object of the invention is to provide semiconductor fabricating equipment, and a related method, that minimizes the negative influence of a material generated at one operational unit (e.g., deteriorated gas generated in an adhesion unit) on a process performed on another operational unit (e.g., a baking unit and/or a cooling unit) during the course of sequential in-line type processing.

Toward this objective, in the devices of claims 1 and 4 and the method of claim 8, the adhesion unit (e.g., 140) is installed on a base body (e.g., 110) and the bake unit (e.g. 160) is installed above the adhesion unit (e.g., 140), thereby preventing any operational failure caused by contamination by a process deteriorating gas (e.g., ammonia). So, in the devices of claims 1 and 4, the adhesion unit is installed on a

base body so that air flows from the adhesion unit toward the base body, which may operate as a first outlet for the process deteriorating gas, and not toward units where deterioration may be caused by the process deteriorating gas.

In contrast, as shown in FIG. 4 of Hasebe, the adhesion unit AD is not installed on a base body, but rather is installed on a cleaning/cooling unit COL where cooling occurs after the adhesion process is completed before the photoresist layer is deposited on the wafer. Thus, in Hasebe, air (containing the process deteriorating gas) flows from the adhesion unit AD toward the cleaning/cooling unit COL.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 4 and 8 are all patentable over Hasebe.

Claims 3, 4-7, and 9-12 all depend from claims 1, 4 and 8 respectively, and are deemed patentable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claims 1, 4 and 8.

NEW CLAIMS 13-21

Among other things, the device of claim 13, all of the second semiconductor process units are installed so that clean air flows over the first and second semiconductor process units to carry the process deteriorating gas away from the second semiconductor process units.

Applicants respectfully submit that such a feature is not disclosed by Hasebe, where one of the second semiconductor process units (e.g., the cleaning/cooling unit

COL) is installed so that clean air flows over the adhesion unit AD and the cleaning/cooling unit COL semiconductor process units to carry the process deteriorating gas TOWARD the cleaning/cooling unit COL. This is in direct contrast to claim 13.

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 13-19 are patentable over Hasebe.

Claims 20 and 21 depend from claims 1 and 4 respectively and are deemed patentable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claims 1 and 4. Also, Hasebe does not disclose or suggest a cooling unit installed at a third position, wherein clean air flows from the third position where the cooling unit is installed to the first position where the adhesion unit is installed, to carry the process deteriorating gas away from the cooling unit.

Accordingly, for at least these additional reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 19 and 20 are patentable over Hasebe.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner allow claims 1, 3-4, and 6-21 and pass the application to issue.

In the event that there are any outstanding matters remaining in the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact Kenneth D. Springer (Reg. No. 39,843) at (703) 715-0870 to discuss these matters.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0238 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

VOLENTINE FRANCOS, P.L.L.C.

Date: 28 November 2003

By: 
Kenneth D. Springer
Registration No. 39,843

VOLENTINE FRANCOS, P.L.L.C.
12200 Sunrise Valley Drive, Suite 150
Reston, Virginia 20191
Telephone No.: (703) 715-0870
Facsimile No.: (703) 715-0877